



County Hall
Cardiff
CF10 4UW
Tel: (029) 2087 2000

Neuadd y Sir
Caerdydd
CF10 4UW
Ffôn: (029) 2087 2000

CORRESPONDENCE FOLLOWING THE COMMITTEE MEETING

Committee POLICY REVIEW AND PERFORMANCE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Date and Time of Meeting WEDNESDAY, 22 NOVEMBER 2023, 5.30 PM

Please find below correspondence send by the Committee Chair following the meeting, together with any responses received.

For any further details, please contact scrutinyviewpoints@cardiff.gov.uk

10 **Correspondence following Committee Meeting**(Pages 3 - 10)

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Date: 24 November 2023

Councillor Huw Thomas,
Chair, Cardiff Public Services Board
Cardiff Council,
County Hall,
Cardiff
CF10 4UW



County Hall
Cardiff,
CF10 4UW
Tel: (029) 2087 2087

Neuadd y Sir
Caerdydd,
CF10 4UW
Ffôn: (029) 2087 2088

Dear Huw,

Policy Review & Performance Scrutiny Committee: 22 November 2023

The Policy Review and Performance Scrutiny Committee welcomed the opportunity to consider the effectiveness of Cardiff Public Services Board over the past year. We were particularly pleased to have the views of senior UHB and PCC partners. Thank you for attending as Chair of the CPSB. Please also pass on our appreciation to Charles Janczewski (UHB), Fiona Kinghorn (UHB) and Alun Michael (PCC), Paul Orders and Gareth Newell, for their active commitment to partnership working. The Committee very much welcomed the report and the insightful responses to scrutiny questions from Board members. We offer the following observations and recommendations for the Boards consideration.

Value of partnership working

The Committee found all partners fully cogniscent of the value and progress in partnership working in the Capital City, all agreeing that if the CPSB did not exist it would need to be created. It is clearly where City level priorities are set, tricky issues are shared and unblocked, and solutions mobilised at speed. We note the UHB partner view that post pandemic the challenges that need unpicking are more considerable and the culture of trust and openness within which local knowledge is shared by partners is of great benefit in removing health inequalities. Members also noted the Commissioner's comment that the engagement of the Health Board in partnership working was in his view the best he had experienced. The Board offers leadership, vision and strategic decision making and therefore it is no co-incidence that the Cardiff PSB was invited by the Minister for Local Government to present its exemplary approach in evidence to the Partnership Council of Wales.

Demand pressures

The Committee explored the impact on partnership working of increasing demand pressures and falling public expenditure. We note the success of solutions such as the management of hospital discharge by the *pink army* minimising greater cost pressures. The need for partnership solutions has clearly increased as the pressures grow, and you reassured us there is an urgency of focus that allows partners to unpick issues and find solutions.

Citizen engagement

Members consider citizens are a major stakeholder in partnership work. We note that Third Sector Board partners strongly uphold the matter of consultation with citizens, and so we welcome partners views that public consultation could be improved. We noted the Commissioner highlighted there may be opportunities to address overlap in partner consultations and take a more co-ordinated approach through the Board. We are therefore pleased you will consider reviewing the outcomes the Board currently monitors to enhance measurement of the effectiveness of citizen engagement.

Community Partnerships

Some members felt there may be merit in re-introducing community planning partnerships given that public services are under threat. We note the Chief Executive's view that the approach was resource intensive, for often low community participation and there is a great deal of joined up locality working taking place on key issues within communities. Members felt there may be an opportunity to re-instate engagement between PCSO's and local councillors focussed on bringing communities together where there is a need.

Public service workforce pressures

The Committee explored how public service pressures were impacting on partners workforces, particularly in the health service. Partners were clear there has been immense pressure and are conscious of the need to support staff

Amplifying Prevention

Members heard the Director of Public Health's Amplifying Prevention report sets out themes that tackle inequity, for example focussing on childhood vaccinations, bowel screening and healthy eating. The Commissioner referred to work with Public Health Wales to design a response to research on adverse childhood experiences (ACE's). Members were therefore assured of the Boards critical focus on both crime prevention and health inequality.

Governance Review

The Committee endorses the Vice Chairman's view that the Board is to be commended for having the appetite to undertake a full governance review of the partnership landscape, and particularly the appetite to address the relationship between the CPSB and the RPB (Regional Partnership Board). Inevitably there is incremental growth in partnership structures over time which requires periodic de-cluttering. We are assured that the review process adopted was exemplary and we commend you on a review outcome that has produced a calmer structure worthy of the listening, talking and time challenges involved in arriving at an improved position.

Line of Sight

The Committee concurs with the importance of all partners understanding the line of sight. We note that the CPSB and the RPB have a different geographic outline. We consider this makes it more meaningful that the line of sight between the CPSB and the RPB has clearly been strengthened by the governance review, noting that the RPB Annual Report will be formally presented to the Board each year.

Financial Savings

Members explored whether the financial savings achieved through partnership working are evidenced or recorded. We note your view that many actions have had a return on investment, however the benefits realised are often cost avoidance as opposed to budget savings.

Finally, during the scrutiny Members neatly summed up the success of the Board with the comment '*thank you for the ambition*', a comment in which I feel you and the Board should take great pride.

Recommendations following this scrutiny:

- That you consider reviewing the outcomes currently monitored by the Board to enhance measurement of the effectiveness of citizen engagement.

Once again, on behalf of the PRAP Scrutiny Committee, the attendance of yourself and key partners to assist us in our consideration of the Cardiff PSB is much appreciated. I look forward to the Board's response.

Yours sincerely,



COUNCILLOR JOEL WILLIAMS

CHAIR, POLICY REVIEW AND PERFORMANCE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

cc Members of the Policy Review & Performance Scrutiny Committee,
Charles Janczewski, Vice Chair of Cardiff PSB, C&V UHB,
Alun Michael, South Wales Police & Crime Commissioner,
Paul Orders, Chief Executive, Cardiff Council,
Fiona Kinghorn, Director of Public Health
Gareth Newell, Head of Partnerships and Performance, Cardiff Council,
Minister for Housing and Local Government,
Future Generations Commissioner for Wales,
Auditor General for Wales,
Andrea Redmond, Committee Support Officer,
Debi Said, Cabinet Support Officer
Claire Deguara, Cabinet Office Manager

Date: 23 November 2023

Councillor Chris Weaver,
Cabinet Member. Finance, Modernisation & Performance
Cardiff Council,
County Hall,
Cardiff
CF10 4UW



County Hall
Cardiff,
CF10 4UW
Tel: (029) 2087 2087

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Dear Chris,

PRAP Scrutiny Committee 22 November 2023: Budget monitoring m6 2023/24

As Chair of the Policy Review and Performance Scrutiny Committee my sincere thanks for attending Committee on 22 November 2023 to present the budget monitoring month 6 2023/24 report. Please also pass on our appreciation to the Corporate Director Resources, Chris Lee and Head of Finance, Ian Allwood, for presenting an overview. The Committee thanks you for attending in person and has asked me to pass on Member's comments and observations following discussion at the Way Forward.

Budget Position

The Committee notes the improved Revenue budget position at month 6 compared with month 4 has been largely achieved with the use of £800,000 of reserves from the General Contingency fund and a Capital Financing underspend of £1.5m. Members enquired whether this is an artificial improvement. We note that since month 4 the pay award has been agreed therefore is no longer a risk and there remains £1m in the contingency budget. We are assured that the monitoring report is designed to prompt management action to reduce the overspend, there is close collaboration between the Finance team and service areas, regular SMT conversations and focussed one to one review with lead Directors. We note that in a position of budget overspend accountants challenge and potentially delay the filling of all vacant posts where a service is overspent.

Staff Redundancy Option

Members clarified that the option for staff to express an interest in redundancy remains open, that the Council is permitted to capitalise any associated costs within

certain rules, and this will be examined as part of the forthcoming budget. We note the Corporate Director Resources preference for proactive workforce planning.

Childrens Services Overspend

The Committee expressed its disappointment in the Childrens Services overspend and sought clarity as to the breakdown of overspend made available to Cabinet members, whether money was being spent wisely, and indeed whether engaging back bench members in round table conversations could assist. We note you consider the Childrens Services budget position is a corporate issue to resolve, there is a multidisciplinary team looking at potential invest to save options that would also improve outcomes for children, that you consider innovation will be required and will welcome all contributions from back benchers via Scrutiny.

Savings

Members enquired whether service change and efficiency savings had been over ambitious given the level of underachievement. We note the underachievement can be a result of timing, and unforeseen developments, such as the position with St Davids Hall, however services are building in lessons learned. We note that savings through service change always has a higher level of risk than efficiency savings and we agree that percentages achieved will need to increase by year end.

Capital receipts

The Committee is concerned that capital receipts are low at £183,000 compared with the £3m target. We note the Corporate Director Resources view that the delivery of capital receipts must be balanced against ensuring best market values, given it is a 5-year rolling target.

HRA

Members clarified that the Council is able to appropriate HRA funds to purchase council assets for repurposing. There are examples of this being the case, however the Council must ensure the value paid is a fair market rate.

Autumn Statement

The Committee is interested in your view as to how the Chancellors Autumn Statement might impact the Council's budget planning, particularly given the

Council's proposed funding strategy for the Indoor Arena development. Members consider interest rates may take time to fall. We note you are still expecting a challenging 2024/25 budget. There are clearly some difficult decisions ahead and it is with this in mind that we are requesting a written response from the section 151 officer on how the Autumn Statement might impact the Council's budget planning. Members also wish to better understand whether the revised growth figures in the Autumn Statement will impact the delivery of projects funded by borrowing, such as the Indoor Arena.

Requests following this scrutiny:

A written response from the section 151 officer explaining:

- how the Autumn Statement might impact the Council's budget planning
- how revised growth figures in the Autumn Statement will impact the delivery of projects funded by borrowing, such as the Indoor Arena.

Finally, on behalf of the Committee, thank you once again for facilitating monitoring of the budget at month 6 2023/24. With your support, I look forward to continuing the valuable internal challenge established between this Committee and the Cabinet. There is a request for a written statement following the scrutiny, and therefore I look forward to a response.

Yours sincerely,



**COUNCILLOR JOEL WILLIAMS
CHAIR, POLICY REVIEW AND PERFORMANCE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

Cc Members of the Policy Review & Performance Scrutiny Committee;
Leaders of Opposition Parties – John Lancaster, Rodney Berman & Andrea Gibson
Chris Lee, Corporate Director Resources;
Ian Allwood, Head of Finance;
Mr Gavin McArthur, Chair, Governance & Audit Committee.
Chris Pyke, OM Governance & Audit.
Tim Gordon, Head of Communications & External Relations.

Jeremy Rhys, Assistant Head of Communications and External Affairs.
Gary Jones, Head of Democratic Services
Alison Taylor, Cabinet Support Officer
Claire Deguara, Cabinet Business Manager;
Andrea Redmond, Committees Support Officer
Mandy Farnham, Committees Support Officer.